COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES OF UKOU AND SLOU

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to compare the availability, quality, similarities and differences of students' support services in United Kingdom Open University (UKOU) and Sri Lanka Open University (SLOU) and also to identify and enlist the deficiencies that SLOU students are facing in the student support services. To get the desired end four hundred students (two hundred from each university) were taken as sample and a thirty eight items questionnaire on (Likert Scale) was constructed and pilot tested, the reliability of the research tool was 0.957 (Cornbach's Alpha) after getting the data independent sample t-test was run by using SPSS XII. The study found out that student support services of SLOU are quantitatively developing rapidly on the lines of UKOU. Though the media support services of both the institutions have almost the same status in the provision of student support services, yet the UKOU students have better services in general services, regional office services, tutorial services, guidance and counselling services and overall student support services. The conclusions lead to the recommendations that SLOU should improve student support services in all the parameters, but more emphasis should be given on guidance and counselling; library and modern communication facilities like toll free, auto answer may be provided at SLOU regional campuses.

Keywords: Student support Services, General Services, Regional Services, Assignments, Tutorial Services, Counseling Services, Library Services, Students, Distance Learners.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful catalyzing agent which provides mental, physical, ideological and moral training to individuals, so as to enable them to have full consciousness of their purpose in life and to equip them in achieving the purpose. The process of education is changing as we are adjusting ourselves to a life long learning; life style and the role of the adult worker, as learner, needs to be considered within the context of these changes (Bhaskar, D. 1997, p.95). Education enables people to improve their social, cultural and economic situation (Michal and Lock, S. 2002, p.91) . Education plays a pivotal role in the sphere of life. All advanced countries have first of all developed their educational status (Rehman, M. 1999, p.1) Ali, M. (2000, p.23) describes socialization as "the process whereby people learn the attitudes, values and actions appropriate to individuals as members of a particular culture". Education aims ultimately at helping individuals and thereby, the community to become responsible.

Therefore, education is effective and powerful way of achieving development in a country. An uneducated society is unable to make any progress intellectually or economically in any fields. The essence of modern life has changed and education must look ahead and prepare the members of the state for an ever-changing progressive and pragmatic world. On the other hand, world's population has also reached its peak. Poverty is gripping the world to an extent that every citizen has to work at a very young age. Even the parents force their children to involve in labour for earning livelihood. Under such circumstances major population is deprived of availing chance to be enrolled in school or college. It is the dilemma of the day and nobody can close their eyes to this bitter fact of life.

The formal education system due to the population explosion is unable to meet the growing demands of even basic education, and the knowledge explosion has made it compulsory for individuals to refresh, update and upgrade itself their existing knowledge to remain

productive into o competitive world of labour.

It led to the search for alternative, effective and cheoper modes of knowledge and skills. The variety of ideas converged into the concept of open learning that will open the windows of education for all and at ony time. It provided the opportunity of both learning ond earning. Open university soon became a viable ond olternative channel of imparting education at all levels of pre-service and in-service through a distance learning mechanism.

Currently, distance education is fost moving from one-woy correspondence mode to two-way interaction of virtual mode. It is sharing expertise world over encouroging the quality of contents, inculcating knowledge ond skills.

In the 21st century the technological sources and need based strotegy hos mode open/distonce learning system relevant to the individual as well as socio economic needs, and hos goin populority over the traditional mode of leorning. Distance educotion hos so for been introduced as an alternative system of learning in about 40 developing countries, viz, Latin America, Tanzania, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesio, Pokistan, Sri Lanko, Bhutan, Banglodesh, Maldives and USSR.

Distonce Education is a generic term that includes the range of teaching and learning strategies referred to as "Correspondence Educotion", "Independent Study" and "Distance Teoching".

Roshid (1998) rightly stoted that the term "Distance Education" is meont for various forms of study at all levels; the beauty of the system is that in this learning process no continuous and immediote supervision of tutor is required. It focuses more on " planning, guidance and tuition through tutorial but there is planning, guidance ond tuition through tutoriol organizotion".

He further explains that in distance education the process of teaching and leorning is not confined within the four wolls of o classroom. It hos the horizontal mobility, to transcend the barriers of time, space, sex, creed, community and religion.

Thus, in recent years distance education has emerged

as an alternotive mode to higher education oll over the world, especially in developing countries like Pakistan.

The entire teaching learning process in distance leorning depends upon the effectiveness of its student support services, that refers to the help, which, o distance learner receives along with the leorning materiols. It hos many forms i.e. face-to-face teaching, computer medicated communication, counselling, workshop, telephone tutorial, tutorship, support etc.

Students support services comprises of o cluster of focilities and activities that are intended to moke the learning process easier and more interesting for the learner.

Student support services in distance education serves as the interfoce between the institution and the learner. The orgonization and functioning of student support services demand quality curriculum, useful course materials preparation ond efficient delivery mechanism. In this regord Sewort (1993) points out that the structure and activities of student support services depends upon:

- Infinite needs of the clients.
- Educational ethos of the region and of the institution.
- Avoilobility of resources, curriculum ond product of the course.
- Generic differences (extent of heterogeneity) of the target group. Student support services at each level therefore, have its own specific duties ond functions to facilitate a networking, which helps and strengthens the delivery system of distance education courses at different level.

The student support service eventually aims at compensating for the absence of live support from teacher for the benefit of the isolated individual learners and making the necessory basic facilities, available to them directly or indirectly. These services play in fact the role of relay station. (Sharma, 1998)

It may be appropriate to point out thot the support service refers to some services other than the actual course moterial, which an institution provides to its learners to realize the instructional objectives of the course (Gupta. and Gupto1999). Apart from helping the students in

learning and comprehending the course material supplied to them, the queries also should be answered as and when required, and information needed by the students should be supplied to them (Aggarwal, 1997). However, Power (2000) reminds us that the student support service sub-system is probably the most difficult sub-system to manage.

The salient objectives of the student support service in a distance education are summarized by Mehta (1996) as under:

- To help learners fruitfully utilize the learning package by augmenting it with academic support services;

- To help them make their choice and decisions by providing administrative and information support;

- To reduce their sense of isolation caused by distance and consequent lack of regular personal contact;

- To provide learners with access to resources and opportunities for personalized interaction whether mediated or free to face.

Educationists (Gupta and Gupta, 1999, Power, 2000, Sharma, 1998) have shown concern over the status of the student support service, which in their opinion tend to have a law status on the whole. They are also of the view that the quality of correspondence education has been low in terms of course sessions, student support and student learning.

They found as a whole, the student support services to be weak. As a result, the distance learners, are dissatisfied, frustrated, confused and they are dropping out from the system. However, variation of delivery mechanism and student support service is found in distance learning offered in developed and developing countries. The detailed comparison reveals that there are Eastern and Western models of distance education in the world, which provide student support services through their regional networks. The present study is designed to compare the both models of student support services in the distance learning system in United Kingdom and Sri Lanka.

Research Methodology

Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted of the 2170 students

at B.Ed level (UKOU 520 and SLOU 1650).

The 200 students each from both the universities were considered as sample of the study.

Since the study was descriptive in nature, survey approach was considered appropriate to collect the data. For this purpose, questionnaire on five-points (Likert) scale was developed. The questionnaire was validated through pilot testing on 50 students and reliability of the questionnaire was 0.84.

The finalized questionnaire was administered on students personally as well as by mail.

The data collected through questionnaire were coded and analyzed through SPSS XII, mean scores and independent samples t-test were run. Scale values assigned to each of the five responses was as under:

Level of Agreement	Scale Value
S	5
A	4
UNC	3
DA	2
SDA	1

It is evident from the Table 1 that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU. As the study material was timely received, the system of assessment and evaluation was satisfactory, the planning, execution and monitoring of support services were satisfactory, information about telecast/teleconferencing was timely provided and students who submit their assignments in time get special advantages. On all the other statements mean of UKOU is slightly higher but that difference is not significant.

Table 2 reveals that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in overall general services of student support services.

Table 3 shows that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing counselling services, mass media for relevant information and in providing supplementary material for students. UKOU is also better in group discussion that is an effective way to solve students' problems. But as for information regarding admission co-operation to meet students needs, answer the students' queries and to help

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
The study material was timely received	U K	200	4.38	.938	.066	3.626	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	4.05	.909	.064		
The study material was self-explanatory and involved the students into studies	U K	200	4.12	.947	.067	-.745	0.450
	Sri Lanka	200	4.19	1.063	.075		
Admission forms and related information were easily available to the students	U K	200	3.61	1.337	.095	0.000	1.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.61	1.459	.103		
The system of assessment and evaluation was Satisfactory	U K	200	4.28	.941	.067	4.908	0.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.73	1.275	.090		
The planning, execution and monitoring of support services were Satisfactory	U K	200	4.12	1.233	.087	2.270	0.024
	Sri Lanka	200	3.82	1.363	.096		
Educational programmes of open university broadcast was valuable	U K	200	4.32	1.189	.084	1.125	0.261
	Sri Lanka	200	4.18	1.121	.079		
Information about telecast/ teleconferencing was Provided timely	U K	200	3.78	1.432	.101	6.285	0.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.87	1.479	.105		
Workshops were arranged at convenient places	U K	200	3.60	1.418	.100	0.401	0.688
	Sri Lanka	200	3.55	1.322	.093		
The number of tutorial meetings was Adequate	U K	200	3.79	1.235	.087	0.612	0.541
	Sri Lanka	200	3.71	1.374	.097		
Students who submitted their assignments in time get special Advantages	U K	200	4.42	.915	.065	3.674	0.00
	Sri Lanka	200	4.09	.881	.062		
Tutors accustomed to give guidance and encouraged comments on Assignments	U K	200	3.69	1.246	.088	0.673	0.501
	Sri Lanka	200	3.60	1.280	.091		
Assignments returned well in time to the students with detailed Instructions	U K	200	3.97	1.184	.084	0.545	0.586
	Sri Lanka	200	3.90	1.203	.085		

Table 1. The mean difference on general services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

out students in their difficulties regarding exams are concerned UKOU is slightly better than SLOU.

Table 4 indicated that in providing overall regional office services to the students, UKOU is significantly better than SLOU.

From the Table 5 it is evident that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing A .V aids at study centres, tutors' comment on students' assignments for further

Country	N	Meon	Std. Deviation	Std. Errar Mean	t-value	p-value
U K	200	4.0042	1.11302	.07870	2.015	.045
Sri Lonko	200	3.7737	1.17336	.08297		

Table 2. The difference of over all general services of SLOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	-value	p-volue
Regionol office services	U K	200	3.7819	1.23076	.08703	3.004	.003
	Sri Lonka	200	3.4081	1.25779	.08894		

Table 4. The difference on over all regional office services of UKOU and SLOU

instructions and guidance of students. Tutorial sessions ore olso helpful to solve students problems ot study centres ond students can eosily access the study centres. In other aspects like tutors' punctuality and identification of students' deficiencies in their studies, UKOU is better but there is not much difference between the two. SLOU is better than UKOU regarding the competency of the tutors in related subjects.

It is revealed from Table 6 that UKOU is significantly better in providing tutorial services to its students.

Toble 7 shows thot UKOU is significontly better thon SLOU in providing guidonce and counselling services to students and students guides are also helpful for students to understand the system. Guidance and counselling centres were estoblished, which hos olso on effective advisory process than SLOU. Counsellors provide guidance to solve students' problems. Telephonic and computer ossisted guidonce services ore significontly better thon SLOU. UKOU is also better in providing guidance at regional offices but that difference is not significant.

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-volue	p-volue
Admission forms and informotion were easily available well in time at regionol office	U K	200	3.95	1.251	.088	.249	.804
	Sri Lanka	200	3.92	1.158	.082		
Regionol office fully cooperated to meet students' needs	U K	200	3.93	1.180	.083	1.623	.105
	Sri Lanka	200	3.73	1.283	.091		
Caunselling pracess was helpful ta the students in solving their study prablems	U K	200	3.69	1.380	.098	3.434	.001
	Sri Lanka	200	3.23	1.328	.094		
Appropriote moss medio (rodio, TV ond newspoper) wos used to pravide relevant infarmatian by the regianal campus	U K	200	3.98	1.156	.082	10.114	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.78	1.216	.086		
Regionol office gives instont response to students' queries	U K	200	3.69	1.238	.088	1.182	.238
	Sri Lonko	200	3.54	1.381	.098		
Regional affice helps students in difficulties concerning Examinatlans	U K	200	3.57	1.391	.098	-.515	.607
	Sri Lanka	200	3.64	1.326	.094		
Supplementary/ additional books and material were available in the regional office.	U K	200	3.80	1.179	.083	4.818	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.16	1.444	.102		
Group discussions were held to solve students' problem in the study centre	U K	200	3.65	1.359	.096	2.793	.005
	Sri Lonko	200	3.28	1.326	.094		

Table 3. The mean difference on regional office services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Study centres had on easy access to the students.	U K	200	3.90	1.309	.093	1.923	.055
	Sri Lanka	200	3.65	1.239	.088		
Campetent persons were appointed as tutars in the related subject.	U K	200	3.49	1.322	.094	-.780	.436
	Sri Lanka	200	3.59	1.241	.088		
Tutorial sessions were helpful to solve the study problems of students.	U K	200	3.66	1.394	.099	1.677	.094
	Sri Lanka	200	3.43	1.409	.100		
Tutars were punctual in the tutarial meetings.	U K	200	3.70	1.334	.094	1.499	.135
	Sri Lanka	200	3.50	1.334	.094		
Tutors give comments on student assignments.	U K	200	3.74	1.225	.087	3.511	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.29	1.336	.094		
Tutors return the marked assignments well in time with instructions and further guidance.	U K	200	3.66	1.226	.087	1.927	.055
	Sri Lanka	200	3.42	1.316	.093		
Sufficient A.V aids were available at the study centres to meet the student needs.	U K	200	3.76	1.253	.089	5.450	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.05	1.368	.097		
Tutorial meetings provided the students to identify their deficiencies and difficulties in their studies.	U K	200	3.33	1.352	.096	1.602	.110
	Sri Lanka	200	3.11	1.394	.099		

Table 5. The mean difference on tutorial services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

Table 8 indicates that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing guidance and counselling services to its students.

From Table 9 it is evident that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU on providing audio visual and print support to its students. UKOU is also slightly better in helping students through educational programs broadcasted through media, in providing schedule of media programs in study package and an in-adequacy of time schedule of media programs but these differences are not significant.

Table 10 reveals that in providing overall media support services to students UKOU is slightly better than SLOU. This difference is not significant.

It is evident through Table 11 that UKOU is significantly

better than SLOU in providing library services at regional offices. These libraries were equipped with sufficient material to meet students learning needs and the library staff was fully cooperative with the students. UKOU is also significantly better than SLOU in providing photocopy facility to students. Correspondence, teleconferencing and mailing system are well established than SLOU. Tutors maintain students' records properly.

Table 12 shows that UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing all types of library services to its students.

It is revealed by Table 13 that there is a significant difference between UKOU and SLOU in providing students support services and UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing all types of students' support services.

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Tutorial servicess	U K	200	3.6525	1.26506	.08945	2.155	.032
	Sri Lanka	200	3.3763	1.29801	.09178		

Table 6. The difference on overall tutorial services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Guidance ond counselling services were provided to the Students	U K	200	3.56	1.214	.086	8.093	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.52	1.352	.096		
The student guide was helpful ta understand the system and ta follaw the pragramme Systematically	U K	200	3.51	1.393	.098	2.778	.006
	Sri Lanka	200	3.12	1.415	.100		
Guidance and counselling centre was established in the University	U K	200	3.56	1.332	.094	2.089	.037
	Sri Lanka	200	3.29	1.301	.092		
Advisory process remained active in providing praper guidance to students in selecting courses	U K	200	3.45	1.366	.097	2.391	.017
	Sri Lonko	200	3.11	1.435	.101		
Counsellars helped the students in their course difficulties	U K	200	3.54	1.333	.094	2.629	.009
	Sri Lanka	200	3.19	1.368	.097		
There was a pravisian af telephane counselling in the University	U K	200	3.25	1.266	.090	3.252	.001
	Sri Lonko	200	2.83	1.316	.093		
Computer assisted career guidonce focility was availoble ot the regianol office	U K	200	3.73	1.240	.088	8.541	.001
	Sri Lonka	200	2.64	1.312	.093		
There is o need for mare guidance and caunselling pravisian at the regianal affice	U K	200	3.49	1.268	.090	1.741	.082
	Sri Lanka	200	3.26	1.372	.097		

Table 7. The mean difference on counselling services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Caunseling services	U K	200	3.5088	1.26954	.08977	3.990	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.9919	1.32080	.09339		

Table. 8 The difference on overall counselling services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Open University approach of audio-video and print support was appropriate	U K	200	3.50	1.375	.097	1.968	.050
	Sri Lanka	200	3.23	1.370	.097		
The time schedule of the media programmes was Adequate	U K	200	3.58	1.380	.098	1.074	.283
	Sri Lanka	200	3.43	1.412	.100		
The schedule of the media programmes was provided in the study package	U K	200	3.76	1.320	.093	-.078	.938
	Sri Lanka	200	3.77	1.248	.088		
Media programmes were interesting, motivating and helpful for the students	U K	200	3.85	1.231	.087	.444	.658
	Sri Lanka	200	3.80	1.249	.088		
TV educational programmes were relevant to your Studies	U K	200	3.73	1.189	.084	.481	.631
	Sri Lanka	200	3.67	1.304	.092		
Educational programmes Broadcasted through video were helpful	U K	200	3.62	1.255	.089	1.391	.165
	Sri Lanka	200	3.44	1.332	.094		

Table 9. The mean difference on media support services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Media services	U K	200	3.6717	1.26786	.08965	.920	.358
	Sri Lanka	200	3.5542	1.28763	.09105		

Table 10. The difference on overall media support services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
The facility of library was available at the regional office/ Centre	U K	200	3.66	1.222	.086	7.509	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.71	1.294	.091		
Regional library was equipped with sufficient referenced materials to meet Student needs	U K	200	3.58	1.270	.090	5.804	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.80	1.414	.100		
The facility of photocopy was available at the regional library	U K	200	3.79	1.230	.087	10.810	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.40	1.330	.094		
Staff of the regional library cooperates well with the students	U K	200	3.86	1.196	.085	11.808	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	2.42	1.226	.087		
The opportunities were created to involve the students in the discussion on the Subject	U K	200	3.74	1.226	.087	3.978	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.24	1.288	.091		
The facility of interaction between student and teacher was provided through correspondence and Teleconferencing	U K	200	3.80	1.190	.084	4.781	.000
	Sri Lanka	200	3.20	1.336	.094		
There is a provision of interaction between the student learner and tutor through e-mail	U K	200	3.71	1.201	.085	3.431	.001
	Sri Lanka	200	3.27	1.359	.096		
The student record was well maintained by the tutor	U K	200	3.95	1.124	.079	2.254	.025
	Sri Lanka	200	3.68	1.267	.090		

Table 11. The mean difference on library services of student support services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Library services	U K	200	3.7594	1.18532	.08381	6.488	.000
	Sri Lonko	200	2.9650	1.26214	.08925		

Table 12. The difference on overall library services of UKOU and SLOU

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	p-value
Overal Student Suppot Services	U K	200	3.7297	1.21381	.08583	3.119	.002
	Sri Lonka	200	3.3449	1.25368	.08865		

Table 13. The difference on overall student support services of UKOU and SLOU

Discussions

The mean scare of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU on the components:

The study material was timely received, the system of assessment and evaluation was satisfactory, the planning, execution and monitoring of support service was satisfactory, information about telecast / teleconferencing was timely provided and students who submit their assignments in time get special advantages. SLOU is slightly better than UKOU anly an, the study material that was self-explanatory and interesting, involved the students into studies.

On all other components:

Admission forms and related information were available easily to the students, Workshops were arranged at convenient places. The number af tutorial meetings was adequate, Assignments returned well in time to the students with detailed instructions UKOU is slightly better than SLOU (Table 1).

Mean score of UKOU is better than SLOU in providing averall general services of student support services (Table 2). It alsa suppart Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

There is a significant difference between the mean score of UKOU & SLOU:

UKOU is significantly better in providing counselling services, mass media for relevant information, caaperatian ta meet students' needs and in praviding supplementary material for students. UKOU is also better in group discussion that is effective to solve students'

problems, answer the students' queries and admission farms and infarmation were easily available well in time at regianal affice but that difference is nat significant. SLOU is slightly better than UKOU in one component, ie. Regional office helps students in difficulties concerning examinatians (Table 3).

Mean scare af UKOU is significantly better than SLOU an praviding averall regianal affice services ta the students (Table 4). It also support Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

There is a great difference between the mean score of UKOU & SLOU:

UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing A.V aids at study centres, tutars camment an students assignments for further instructions and guidance of students, tutorial sessions are also helpful to solve students problems at study centres and students can easily access the study centres. In ather aspects like: tutars' punctuality and identification of students' deficiencies in their studies, UKOU is better but there is not much difference between the twa. Mean scare af SLOU is better than UKOU regarding the competency of the tutors in related subjects (Table 5).

Mean score of UKOU is significantly better in providing tutorial services to its students than SLOU (Table 6). It also suppart Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

Mean scare af UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in all the components of counselling services of student support services :

As students guides are helpful for students to understand the system, Guidance and counselling centres were established. It has also an effective advisory process, counsellors provide guidance to solve students' problems, telephonic and computer assisted guidance services are significantly better than SLOU (Table 7).

It is evident from the study that overall mean score of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing guidance and counselling services to its students (Table 8). It also support Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

Mean score of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU on providing audio visual and print support to its students. UKOU is also slightly better in helping students through educational programs broadcasted through media, relevancy of T.V programs and in adequacy of time schedule of media programs. SLOU is slightly better than UKOU in providing schedule of media programs in study package (Table 9).

Overall mean score in providing media support services to students, UKOU is slightly better than SLOU. This difference is not significant (Table: 10). It contradicts Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is not better than AIOU.

Mean score of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing library services at regional offices. These libraries were equipped with sufficient material to meet students learning needs and the library staff fully co-operates with the students. UKOU is also significantly better than SLOU in providing photocopy facility to students, correspondence, teleconferencing and mailing system is well established than SLOU. Tutors maintain students' records properly (Table: 11).

Overall mean score of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing all types of library services to its students (Table 12). It also supports Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

There is a significant difference between the mean scores of UKOU and SLOU in providing students support services and mean score of UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing all types of students' support services (Table 13). It also supports Hafeez & Gujjar (2008) that UKOU is better than AIOU.

Conclusions

- UKOU is better than SLOU in providing overall general services to student support.
- Regional office of UKOU helps students in all types of difficulties.
- Tutors at SLOU are not very competent in their related subjects.
- Tutorial services are provided properly to the students by UKOU.
- An effective advisory system has been established by the UKOU and Counsellors provide guidance to solve students' problems.
- Both universities are providing media support services to students almost equally.
- Libraries are sufficiently equipped with material and other facilities to meet students learning needs at UKOU.
- UKOU is significantly better than SLOU in providing all types of students' support services.

Recommendations

- Tutors should be trained enough to conduct tutorials so that it may help the students to understand the new course.
- Competent tutors must be appointed so that they may help the students in their subject areas.
- A counselling centre should be established in regional centres to facilitate students regarding their problems.
- A.V. Aids should be prepared properly according to the needs of the subjects and tutors should be trained to use them accordingly.
- Effective teaching methods should be adopted by the tutors to motivate students for their studies like group discussions, question answer techniques and problem solving methods.
- Correspondence services at SLOU should be made effective so that students can have information properly and in time.

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